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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PARM](#) [ENRG](#) [SENV](#) [TRGY](#) [KNNP](#) [KRAD](#)  
FR  
SUBJECT: G8 GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP: FRENCH CLAIM INTERAGENCY  
BATTLE KEY TO OVERALL POLICY

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Kim Krhounek, Reasons 1.4 (b)  
, (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Lack of engagement by relevant French ministries and political buck-passing of responsibilities appear to be the primary impediments to greater French political support for extension of the G8's Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction (GP). The current perception is that the GP focuses exclusively on Russian nuclear issues, which has led to declining political interest in France, particularly within the two biggest funding ministries -- the Ministries of Industry and Energy -- who have effectively handed off all responsibility to junior partners the MFA and MOD. The French claim that while they could probably support - in theory - the extension of the GP beyond 2012, any commitment, even in principle, would only be possible if the MFA is able to get better inter-agency buy-in and bring the bigger ministries back on board. Post's analysis is that French support will ultimately be a question of political will and sufficient pressure at senior levels, particularly by the office of the Presidency, which has a strong lead on non-proliferation issues. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) MFA GP Action Officer Paul Furia said February 22 that when France made its original ten-year commitment to the GP in 2002, the Ministries of Industry and Energy were the largest contributors, with the MFA and MoD as "junior partners." This was largely due to the focus on removing radioactive materials from, and clearing up, Russian military sites, which were projects for which these ministries had technical expertise. However, according to Furia, beginning in 2006 these ministries began lobbying the Prime Minister's office to allow them to leave their GP responsibilities to the MFA and MoD, claiming that these ministries had primary responsibility for disarmament and non-proliferation. The creation in 2007 of the "super ministry" that would become the Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development, and Oceans (MEEDAT) encouraged this shift by absorbing many of the GP-relevant competencies while allowing GP priorities to get lost among the new ministry's other competing duties. Additionally, Furia said the GP began to lose political significance for the GOF as it came to be seen as little more than a means for Russia to finance its nuclear clean-up.

13. (SBU) In this context, Furia said France has welcomed U.S. and Canadian suggestions that, moving forward, the GP should be considered less as a specific set of Russia-focused projects and more as a larger effort to prevent the spread of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons and materials. While cautioning that the GP would lose political relevance

were it to become a simple "accounting exercise" in which any existing projects are used to account for funding commitments, Furia said French officials were intrigued by the U.S. example of considering relevant projects by agriculture or public health authorities, for example, as part of the overall GP effort. Having not considered the GP in this light before, Furia added, the GOF was currently looking at what assistance priorities outside the MFA and MoD might fit into this rubric.

¶4. (SBU) Furia stressed, however, that France was not currently in a position to commit to a GP extension beyond ¶2012. While in theory the MFA could support an extension, Furia said France does not want to do so unless the GOF is certain of what financial commitments will be involved. If the MFA can convince Prime Minister Fillon that other ministries - MEEDAT, or the ministries of agriculture, health, or industry - should be involved, Furia said continuing at existing levels of funding may be more of a possibility. Existing U.S. and Canadian plans to enlarge the GP beyond Russia and focus on projects beyond nuclear decommissioning that are relevant to these ministries could help encourage the involvement of other GOF actors. Additionally, Furia reiterated a French suggestion to move the GP from the Non-Proliferation Directors Group of the G8 to the Nuclear Safety and Security Group, which he claimed would help the MFA make the case that the GP is wider than just non-proliferation and that the MEEDAT should become involved.

¶5. (C) Furia admitted, however, that the Prime Minister's office has not so far shown a great deal of interest in the

topic, although he hoped that the upcoming preparatory meeting in Montreal would attract more senior attention by requiring France to consider its policy options.

¶6. (C) COMMENT: Although Furia's description of the GOF's interagency buck-passing explains France's inability to fulfill its existing commitments and its reluctance to take on new ones, it does not provide a recipe for engaging France on supporting an extension of the GP. It is in any case questionable whether even ministries with bigger budgets than the MFA have funds available to support future GP projects. Ultimately, although the Prime Minister has the authority to assign responsibilities to various ministries, the GOF's reaction to U.S. proposals will depend on political will, and senior Presidency staff will likely have to be convinced.  
END COMMENT.  
PEKALA